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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

DATE 26 May 1976

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SUBJECT

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MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Bringing Fleet Forces to Combat Readiness

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Bringing Fleet Forces to Combat Readiness

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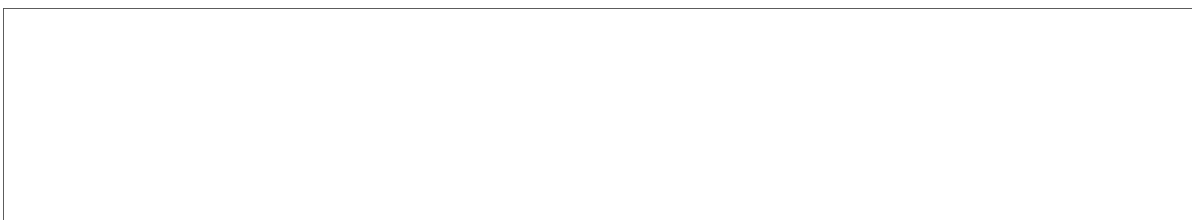
There are a number of essential differences between the readiness of naval forces for combat operations and the combat readiness of other branches of the armed forces. While the strategic rocket forces and aviation, operating from a state of full combat readiness are capable, after receiving a signal, of conducting strikes against assigned enemy targets within a period of from several dozen minutes to several hours, and the ground forces can begin active combat operations immediately following strikes by the rocket forces and aviation, in the navy it is necessary not only to ready weapons, and combat and technical support means, but also to provide time for submarines and surface ships to occupy the designated areas in which they will carry out their missions. These areas may be anywhere from 500 kilometers (for antisubmarine surface ships) to several thousand kilometers (for submarines) from their basing points. The deployment of forces to these areas is a lengthy process and one which requires all-round support. Nuclear submarines require from several days to a week, and diesel submarines up to 30 days, to occupy their areas of combat operations in the ocean and in remote areas of the sea.

As is known, the combat readiness of a fleet is determined by the ability of ships, units and large units to begin combat operations using all types of weapons within a strictly established time period following receipt of a command signal. Measures are of necessity being taken even in peacetime to increase the all-round preparedness level of a fleet's forces so that they may proceed with the direct performance of their combat missions in the shortest possible time. This day-to-day readiness must permit the normal, long-term operation of combat and technical means, must prevent the overexertion of personnel, and must create conditions for a well-organized program of combat and operational training assignments and the necessary repair of ships, aircraft, and their armament. At the same time, part of the forces, already prepared in all respects to perform combat missions, remains on alert to carry out immediate operations (aircraft) or to put to sea (ships).

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Bringing all the forces of the fleet to a state of increased combat readiness means taking final measures aimed at the direct preparation of ships, aircraft and technical means for the employment of their weapons in combat; the organization and conduct of reconnaissance, camouflage, warfare

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against enemy radioelectronic means, and all forms of defense and protection; the deployment of command posts; and the preparation of control and support means. The experience of fleet exercises shows that if we do not consider the time required to bring ships out of reserve and to prepare warships and noncombatant ships that have been under repair or taken from the national economy, then all of the basic measures needed to bring the forces of the fleet to combat readiness will require up to two to three days.

Of all the elements determining the full combat readiness of the fleet we will consider only the questions of replenishing ships and units with all types of stores, the dispersal of forces, and their deployment at sea -- steps which require a great deal of time and therefore deserve special attention on the part of the command and staffs.

In order that the forces may maintain a higher level of readiness even under day-to-day peacetime conditions, submarines and surface ships must always maintain their materiel stores at the authorized level and immediately replenish them to the full norms after they have been expended during combat training missions. This pertains above all to fuel, water, lubricants, and other materiel which ships consume continuously. Ships must also always carry the established norm of ammunition with conventional warheads. In addition, it is known that some types of ship's weapons cannot be permanently kept on board in peacetime. They are issued to the ships only by special orders.

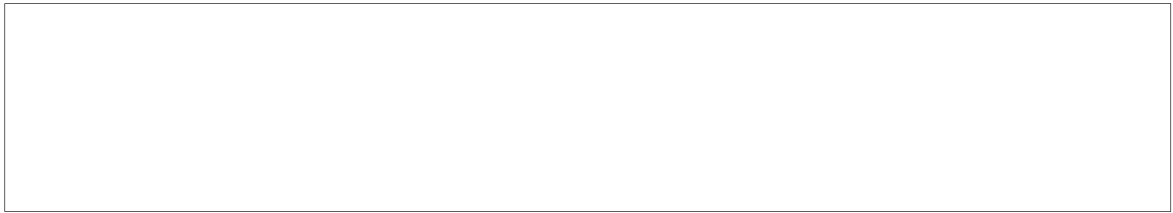
The fleet's forces replenish short supplies of materiel immediately upon receiving the combat alert signal or the order to go to increased combat readiness. Practice in exercises has shown that submarines and surface ships should take on stores at dispersal points from mobile support detachments made up of different ships and floating means of the auxiliary fleet. Presumably these mobile detachments should be in a position to simultaneously supply needed stores to all the ships of one or several large units located in a given area. This procedure for replenishing ship supplies of fuel, water, lubricants, food, and other materiel has made it possible to significantly reduce the time required for the forces to prepare for combat operations. In addition, the procedure demands a high level of organization and efficiency from the rear services organs and continuously operating communications between the rear services organs and the ships and units.

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The preparation and delivery of missiles and torpedoes with nuclear warheads to ships presents the greatest difficulty in supplying the fleet



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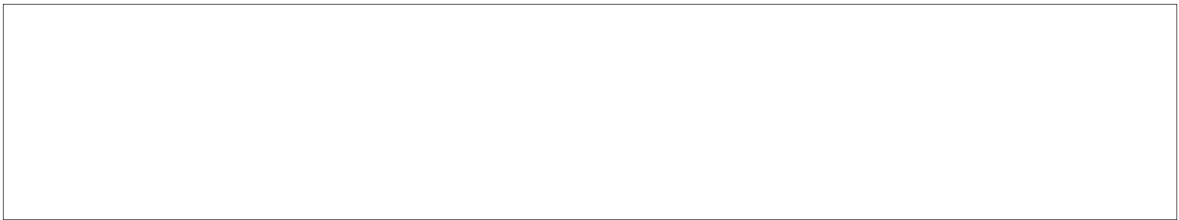
forces with materiel. It is known that these types of weapons are prepared at special shore bases that have complex technical equipment and measuring and inspection instruments. The prepared and mated missiles and torpedoes are delivered by special types of transport to berths where they are loaded into submarines and surface ships, and the missiles, in addition, are filled with fuel and oxidizing agents. The great weight and size of missiles and torpedoes and the complexity and extreme sensitivity of their apparatus require that fairly heavy-duty hoisting means be used to load them and that the entire operation be conducted with the utmost care to preclude damage to the item or to its components. It is quite obvious that all this takes a long time and, as the experience of operational exercises shows, it has been until now one of the major factors limiting the speed with which the forces of the fleet can be brought to full combat readiness.

One way of reducing the time needed to supply ships with special weapons may be to increase the number of both stationary and temporary points in the fleets responsible for the preparation and delivery of missiles and torpedoes to ships. Great importance should be attached to building up mobile support means and developing methods of deploying temporary points on unprepared sections of the coast, as well as to having a creative approach to finding and mastering more advanced technological processes which would reduce the total time required to prepare and deliver special weapons to ships. Experience gained in combat and operational training has shown that, as a result of the adoption of new operating methods in naval aviation, the time required to prepare certain types of air-launched missiles and suspend them from aircraft has been reduced by a factor of more than two.

A method involving the separate loading of missiles, fuel and oxidizing agents at several berths may have considerable effect on reducing the time needed by submarines to take on missiles. Rough calculations show that it is possible to reduce the time required by large units of missile-carrying submarines to reach a state of readiness. Obviously this method should be thoroughly tested as soon as possible and introduced into fleet practice.

One of the indicators of the readiness of the fleet to begin combat operations is the degree of dispersal of its basing. Norms for the dispersed basing of ships and aviation have been established during fleet combat training. The organization of ship basing proceeds from the requirement that the enemy be unable to destroy more than one large ship (submarine) by the burst of one nuclear warhead (of medium calculated yield); in naval aviation, no more than one air regiment may be based at an

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airfield.

These norms provide the best solution to the problem of dispersal of forces. However, if we take into account economic capabilities, the nature of the naval theater and other factors, such basing is not feasible as a rule under normal conditions. Therefore, in peacetime it is possible to establish only main basing points designed for the accommodation and all-round support of individual ships and large units of the fleet. In addition, temporary basing points are chosen, a reserve of mobile basing means is built up, supply points are prepared for providing ships with materiel, and other measures are taken to ensure the further dispersal of ships of the fleet in the event that the situation worsens. In the aviation of the fleet, alternate airfields are prepared for the support of combat operations in the event the main airfields are put out of action. Thus, even under peacetime conditions a system is being developed for the dispersed basing of the main large units of the fleet.

Of course the further dispersal of forces will be necessary with the appearance of an immediate threat of an enemy attack; its purpose will be to bring ships and aviation as close as possible to the probable areas of combat operations and to remove them from areas subject to enemy strikes to prevent their destruction in their basing areas. Strike groupings of forces are established at the same time.

The system of basing dispersal is continually being improved in fleet exercises. Sometimes errors occur which lead to a decrease in the combat readiness of some of the branch arms of the forces. Since previously shortcomings in the dispersal actions of the forces have been tolerated, we will point out how, in our opinion, they should be carried out.

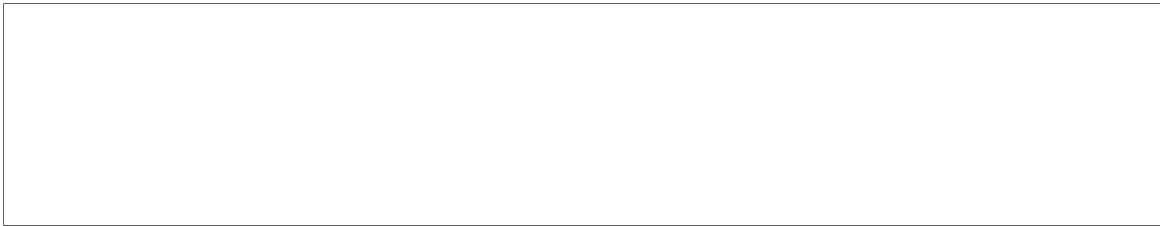
Submarines with their authorized supply of materiel and organic weapons fully prepared for combat employment must immediately, at a signal from the fleet command, head out to sea to the probable areas of combat operations. No delay of these submarines at their bases can be justified.

Submarines that must be loaded with missiles and torpedoes with special warheads should disperse near the supply points for these weapons so that a minimum amount of time will be spent in moving the submarines from their anchorage areas to the berths where they are supplied with missiles and torpedoes. In a number of cases during exercises this principle was not adhered to, and as a result there was a significant increase in the time required to prepare the boats for sea and a delay in their deployment for the start of combat operations.

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After receiving their authorized ammunition the submarines should immediately proceed to their designated areas of combat operations at sea. A submarine grouping capable of performing an assigned task will be established in each area.

Submarines which cannot take part in combat operations because of their level of combat readiness or the condition of their technical equipment should be dispersed to temporary mooring or ship repair points. If there is an immediate threat of enemy strikes these submarines should submerge, and if the situation and hydrographic conditions permit, they should anchor on the bottom so that enemy aircraft will not be able to detect and destroy them.

As fleet forces begin to be brought to a state of combat readiness, small antisubmarine surface ships and minesweepers replenish all types of materiel stores at their dispersal points in the shortest possible time and immediately begin performing combat tasks in their coastal areas aimed at ensuring the deployment of submarines at sea.

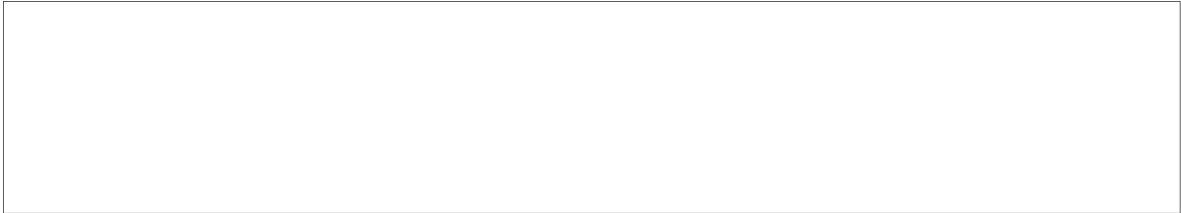
Large antisubmarine surface ships forming a part of hunter-killer groups should immediately deploy to their designated areas at sea to search for enemy submarines and track them continuously until they receive the order to employ their weapons. While the main forces of the fleet -- the submarines -- are being deployed, antisubmarine ships will also be allocated to support the movement of their own submarines to areas of combat operations.

Surface strike ships and boats armed with missiles and torpedoes upon receiving the signal will disperse to designated temporary mooring points where they will replenish their supplies of materiel. The dispersal points for surface strike ships are selected to permit ship strike groups to be used immediately to carry out tasks that arise unexpectedly (to support the deployment of submarines and to disrupt operations by enemy reconnaissance ships near our coast). The make-up of ship strike groups at temporary basing points is determined on the basis of their combat capabilities, the conditions of the situation and probable operations.

It is of great importance that the dispersal of surface strike ships be designed with consideration for those missions which they might perform during a period of threat or at the initiation of combat operations. 50X1-HUM Unfortunately, one frequently observes attempts to hide these ships in the course of dispersal, to conceal them to prevent their destruction by the enemy, although this aim can hardly be considered the main objective. Such



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a solution to the problem of dispersing surface strike ships and boats is incorrect and dooms them to passivity, minimizes their role in combat operations at sea and at the same time reduces the ability of the fleet's forces to perform the tasks confronting them.

The fleet's aviation is dispersed at individual airfields located on shore. This creates the most favorable conditions for aviation units and large units to deliver the first strikes against enemy ship groupings as quickly as possible after the initiation of combat operations and at the maximum distance from our coast. During operational and combat training exercises involving the dispersal of missile-carrying aircraft, the fleet command has frequently attempted to move the aircraft to alternate airfields in the deep rear. Usually this is done to protect the aviation and prevent its destruction by enemy nuclear strikes against forward airfields. However, this decision is fundamentally wrong. The dispersal of large units of missile-carrying aviation to the deep rear creates enormous difficulties with regard to its further employment. One of these difficulties is that missile-carrying aviation units based at rear airfields cannot strike enemy fleet groupings at the earliest possible time at the start of combat operations. In addition, the radius of operation of aviation units operating from rear airfields is shortened by a distance equal to that between the airfields and the coast, and it may happen that the operating areas of enemy ships will be beyond the range of our aviation. At the same time it is dangerous for aviation units to land at forward airfields to refuel under such conditions since this exposes them to strikes by enemy missiles and aviation.

Of course air-to-air refueling may be organized, but this task requires a large number of tanker aircraft and well-trained flight personnel, and involves considerable difficulties. Therefore, it would be more correct to disperse the missile-carrying aviation at permanent forward airfields which are well equipped with the technical means necessary to prepare the units for combat operations. And to avoid destruction of aircraft at these airfields, at the moment an enemy attack is threatened the command should promptly order the aviation units to take off and perform their combat missions. Aircraft returning from strikes against enemy ships can land at surviving airfields.

Antisubmarine aviation should be allocated to those airfields which are closest to the probable areas of their combat operations. This will enable the antisubmarine aircraft to spend a minimum amount of time on flights to submarine search areas and will significantly increase the time that they may spend over the water in the performance of their missions.

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In addition, antisubmarine aviation should have prepared, alternate airfields near the coast where they could be based in the event that their main airfields are put out of operation. Reserves of antisubmarine weapons and other materiel necessary to support the operations of antisubmarine aviation should be established in advance at these alternate airfields.

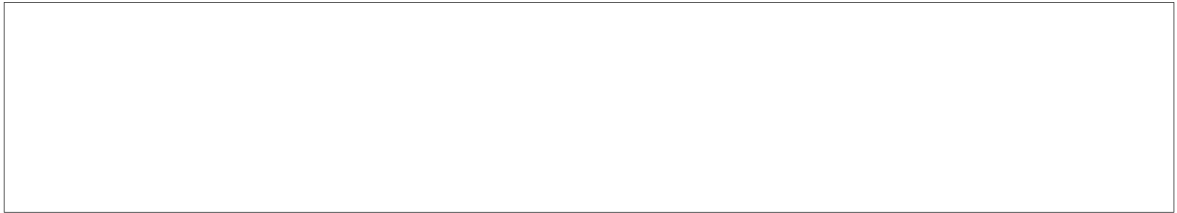
The dispersal of the materiel reserves required for the support of fleet forces is carried out in peacetime and conforms to the basing system of the forces in the theater. Supply storage sites should be selected in areas that are distant from possible targets of enemy nuclear strikes and from which materiel can be conveniently delivered to ships and to units.

When the forces of the fleet are alerted by a combat alert signal it may also be possible to use ships of the auxiliary fleet, naval transports, ✓ fishing boats and other floating means for the dispersal of materiel reserves. The use of such means is extremely advantageous. They may be loaded with a considerable amount of supplies from major fleet warehouses and arsenals and dispersed to points on the coast near the mooring sites of submarines and surface ships. This will undoubtedly increase their survivability and at the same time will permit the rapid delivery of the necessary supplies to ships at dispersed basing areas.

The timely dispersal of enterprises and production facilities engaged in the repair of ships as well as their weapons and combat and technical means is very important. It appears to us that the effort to disperse fleet repair facilities should be based on the development of floating workshops of all types capable of making immediate repairs on ships and combat means. One should not rule out such labor-consuming projects as the advance construction of underground repair shops, particularly those that will be involved in restoring the combat effectiveness of nuclear submarines. Such shops will be less vulnerable to enemy strikes and are therefore better able to meet the conditions of modern warfare.

The purpose of dispersing control organs when bringing the forces to increased combat readiness is to deploy the command posts of the fleet, formations and large units as well as the rear control post so as to ensure continuous control over all the operations of the forces, rear units and facilities under the complex conditions of the situation. At the same time, the control organs are moved from their permanent deployment areas to reduce the probability of their destruction by enemy nuclear strikes. 50X1-HUM Command posts should be deployed in previously prepared and equipped structures that are protected against nuclear strikes in cliffs, on ships, and sometimes in the field, using mobile communications means and other

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equipment necessary to ensure the operation of command posts.

During a threatening situation the deployment of forces, that is, their movement in the shortest possible time from basing points to designated areas of the sea (ocean) for the purpose of occupying an initial position for the beginning of combat operations, should be considered one of the measures required to bring the fleet to full combat readiness. During combat operations, deployment represents a part of the operation -- one of its missions.

Large-scale fleet exercises in which submarines and surface ships put to sea have shown that the deployment of large numbers of submarines presents a major problem. Certain preliminary conclusions may be drawn on the basis of a generalization of results of exercises conducted to work out fleet operations in the initial period of a nuclear war.

Depending upon the situation, submarines may be deployed on the eve of war to waiting areas or directly to the probable areas of combat operations. Submarines are deployed to waiting areas when the situation is not sufficiently clear, when combat operations are not expected to begin immediately, and when the mission of the fleet is to conceal its preparations from the probable enemy to the maximum extent. The submarines are subsequently deployed from the waiting areas to the areas of combat operations.

The designated submarine waiting areas should always be outside the sea (ocean) zones that are actively monitored by the enemy and away from busy merchant shipping lanes, civil aircraft routes, and areas where fishing and marine hunting boats congregate. The submarine transit lanes to these waiting areas are worked out by the fleet staff. The number of allotted transit lanes should be sufficient to permit the deployment of a given number of submarines in a prescribed period of time. At the same time, submarines must have freedom for unlimited maneuvering to avoid ships and aircraft of the probable enemy. Therefore, the distances between adjacent lanes should be sufficient to preclude accidental collisions of our submarines. In establishing transit routes one must allow for possible errors in determining positions at sea.

The operational training practice of fleet submarine forces has shown that they should not be deployed along all the transit lanes; 10 to 15 percent of the total number of lanes should be reserved for those situations when a submarine is forced to return to its base on its own or is ordered to do so by the fleet command post.

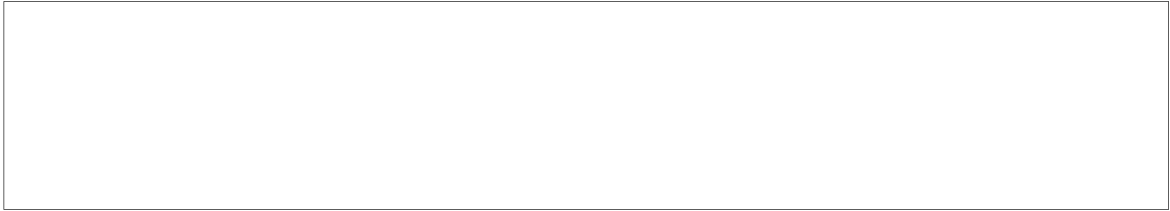
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The time required by submarines to reach combat areas (waiting areas) may be reduced by deploying them in echelons. An echelon may comprise one or several submarine strike groupings assigned to operate in a specified area of a naval theater. In forming echelons, an effort should be made to see that they consist of submarines that will be performing one and the same mission. Antisubmarine submarines must be deployed in the first echelon of torpedo attack submarines so that they can more rapidly occupy their designated areas and immediately begin searching for enemy missile-carrying submarines. Nuclear submarines and missile-carrying submarines, since they carry out their missions individually, are deployed independently to waiting areas or areas of combat operations, usually in advance of the diesel submarine echelons.

Submarines with nuclear power plants should always remain submerged throughout the entire move in order to conceal their deployment. Under favorable conditions diesel submarines may travel the major part of the route using snorkels (devices which permit operation of the engine under water). Areas at sea and especially narrows that are monitored by the probable enemy should be forced only in the submerged position. In the ocean where the search for submarines is carried out primarily by the aviation of the probable enemy, submarines may move on the surface at night while maintaining a careful watch for active airborne radars. If such radars are detected the boats should avoid encountering the enemy by diving and maneuvering in the depth.

Strict observance of the prescribed radio communications routine is extremely important in ensuring concealment during deployment. Submarines use their radio communications means to transmit reports to shore only at specially designated lines (areas) unless groupings of the enemy fleet that may endanger their operations have been detected, or there is damage or there are severe technical malfunctions in equipment which will not permit them to perform their mission successfully. All reports are made over the super-highspeed communications channel.

Shore-based radio communications centers should organize their operations to maintain the emission routine that was established in the period prior to the deployment of the submarines. The frequency of communication periods must not be increased. In fleet exercises there were cases when submarines at sea were forced to remain virtually the whole time at periscope depth waiting for radio messages addressed to them, since, although they were scheduled to come close to the surface every two hours, shore radio stations transmitted to them over a period of one and a half hours or more. For this reason nuclear submarines should be assigned



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special radio nets so that transmissions to them will not be mixed with those sent to diesel submarines.

It is difficult to deploy a large number of submarines to sea so that the probable enemy, who conducts intensive reconnaissance in the prewar period, will not notice anything. He may, for example, have ascertained that the forces have left their basing points. Therefore, it is extremely important during this period to mislead the enemy regarding the purpose and direction of deployment of the forces. Various camouflage methods may be used to achieve this (simulated exercises with the actual participation of specially assigned submarines and surface ships, an increase in the radio traffic between naval bases). At the same time aggressive measures must be taken against hostile submarines and aircraft conducting reconnaissance in the deployment area of our submarines and primarily in areas through which they move after leaving their basing points.

The timely supply of information to our submarines on the make-up and activities of forces of the probable enemy along the transit lanes will also play a large role in maintaining concealment during deployment. The reconnaissance of enemy forces should be planned to coincide with the movement of our submarines so that the entire area of their movement will be kept under observation. The reconnaissance should provide especially detailed coverage of those areas of the sea through which the next daily stage of submarine movement will pass. This reconnaissance may be performed by aviation, surface ships, submarines on continuous alert in specified areas at sea, and radio reconnaissance means. Information provided by transport ships and fishing boats at sea is also used for this purpose.

We have examined only one of the important areas of the work of the command and staffs to bring the forces of the fleet to a state of readiness for combat operations. A study of these questions and the search for and mastery of new, more efficient means of resupplying ships and units with materiel, of dispersing forces, and deploying them to combat operations areas will make it possible to reduce the time required to bring them to immediate combat readiness and at the same time will ensure that the requirements for further increasing the combat readiness of the navy will be satisfied.

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